

REMARKS

The present response is to the Office Action mailed in the above-referenced case on March 4, 2003. Claims 1-41 are pending for examination. The Examiner has rejected claims 25-30 and 31-36 under 35 U.S.C. 112, first paragraph, due to the existence of negative limitations. Claims 17-22 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite. Claims 1, 2, 9 and 10 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) as being anticipated by Ducaroir et al. (U.S. 6,167,077), hereinafter Ducaroir. Claims 3-8 and 11-16 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Ducaroir and further in view of Franaszek et al. (U.S. 6,215,412 B1), hereinafter Franaszek. Claims 23 and 24 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) as being unpatentable over Prentice et al. (U.S. 6,397,042), hereinafter Prentice, and further in view of Ranjan (U.S. 6,397,042 right, hereinafter Ranjan. Claims 37-41 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) as being unpatentable over Ducaroir, and further in view over Soleiman et al. (U.S. 6,373,858), hereinafter Soleiman. The Examiner objects to claims 25-30 as being depended upon a rejected base claim, indicating that the claims would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

Applicant has carefully studied the prior art references cited and applied by the Examiner, and the Examiner's statements, objections and rejections in the instant Office Action. Applicant herein accepts the allowable subject matter indicated by the Examiner, and accordingly, amends base claim 23 in independent form to include the limitations of claim 25 indicated as allowable by the Examiner. Claim 25 is accordingly canceled.

Regarding the Examiner's 112 rejection of claims 25-30 and 31-36, claim 25 has been herein canceled as stated above, and claims 26-28 are amended to change the dependency from claim 25 to claim 23 which is now a patentable claim as amended above. Regarding claims 31-36, applicant herein amends claim 31 to correct the negative limitation.

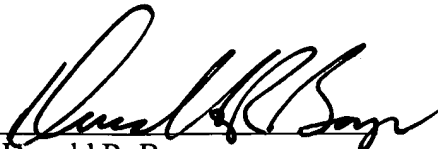
In response to the Examiner's 112 rejection of claims 17-22, applicant herein amends claim 17 to correct the limitations stated by the Examiner to be conflicting.

Responding to the Examiner's 102 rejection of claims 1, 2, 9 and 10, the 103 rejection of claims 3-8 and 11-16, the 102 rejection of claims 23 and 24, and the 102 rejection of claims 37-41, applicant herein cancels the claims in the present response, but reserves the right to submit these or similar claims in one or more continuation applications for reexamination.

In view of applicant's above amendments to the claims overcoming the informalities and accepting the allowable subject matter, independent claims 17, 23, and 31 are now patentable claims. Depending claims 18-22, 24, 26-30 and 32-36 are then patentable on their own merits, or at least a depended from a patentable claim.

It is therefore respectfully requested that this application be reconsidered, the claims remaining standing be allowed, and that this case be passed quickly to issue. If there are any time extensions needed beyond any extension specifically requested with this amendment, such extension of time is hereby requested. If there are any fees due beyond any fees paid with this amendment, authorization is given to deduct such fees from deposit account 50-0534.

Respectfully submitted
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